

West Kent

Sevenoaks

Sevenoaks District can claim to be one of the very best connected areas in the country. With the M25 and M20 motorways and extensive rail lines, you can reach the capital in less than 30 minutes with seaports and airports all within easy reach.

The district offers an amazing work-life balance and is increasingly becoming the choice for those who want an attractive and desirable place to live and work. This is evident in house prices, which are 40% higher than the county average. It is a place for business, providing an environment where start-ups are more likely to survive, regardless of size. The district offers a choice of business property with co-working spaces, town centre and rural locations all at competitive rates.

The draft Local Plan aims to balance the special environment with the needs of businesses, developers and residents. It seeks to make the best use of existing sites while providing new infrastructure to support businesses, growth and housing choices with the delivery of some 10,000 new homes.

Sevenoaks District Council is a multi-award winning council, having previously won the Guardian Public Service Award and numerous sector awards. Within local government, Sevenoaks is known for becoming the first financially self-sufficient council in the country. Sevenoaks pioneered the 10-year budget and a successful property investment strategy that aims to stimulate development and regeneration. Sevenoaks District Council is recognised nationally for its financial innovation, robust financial management and sound investment decisions.

Recent developments undertaken by the council and its investment company Quercus 7, include the Sevenoaks Premier Inn, two multi-level car parks and Burlington Mews which comprises ten contemporary luxury townhouses with panoramic views across the Knole Estate.

Swanley is an area of focus for the council. The town is just 26 minutes from London Victoria by rail and next to the M25 Junction 3. The Council recently broke earth to



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Proposal for 27-37 High Street, Swanley.

deliver a new, £20m state-of-the-art leisure centre and has achieved planning permission on three other sites. Later this year, the Council will start work on a new business hub, providing co-working space and support to entrepreneurs along with new homes as part of plans to regenerate the important southern gateway to the town. Swanley is also set to receive further regeneration in coming years with the approval of a U+I development for Swanley shopping centre offering an additional 300 homes and 4,645m² (50,000ft²) of commercial space. Renovation and refurbishment of Swanley Rail station is also underway.

The District Council is also leading on new plans to regenerate Sevenoaks town.

If you would like to know more about growth opportunities in the District, please contact the Economic Development and Property Team on business@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Tonbridge and Malling

Economic regeneration is a key component in the Borough's recovery plans and future vision. Housing and infrastructure are critical in building local resilience, sustainability and the foundations for future growth across the Borough. To safeguard these projects and the jobs and economic activity they bring, the Council has been active in assisting local developers, construction firms and businesses to ensure that investments in the Borough continue to progress to fruition.

Simultaneously, the Council is pressing ahead with the allocation of new sites in order to meet local demand and provide essential upgrades for the period up to 2031. The Council submitted a new Local Plan to the Secretary of State in January 2019, with the Examination in Public taking place in Autumn 2020 and adoption in 2021.

Indeed, despite the challenges that the economy currently faces, there have been a number of positive developments in the borough during the past year:

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

Strategic Sites

Borough Green Gardens is one of 19 Garden Villages that was added into the UK Garden Communities Programme in 2019. In addition to private investment, funding from Homes England has been provided to help progress the project. The Board are currently overseeing work by consultants, Arcadis, to produce a development brief for the site which will establish a strategic direction and provide information in support of the Local Plan Examination in Public later in the year.

Peter's Village is an all-new rural community, built on the banks of the Medway between Snodland and Rochester and overlooked by the imposing heights of the Kent Downs. The 1,000-home mixed-use development has been progressing well for a number of years and enjoys excellent road linkage to the M2, M20 and M25 – in addition to high-speed rail and coach services for London commuters. The site is becoming known for its mix of quality apartments and houses, constructed by award winning housebuilders and supported by a new primary school and community facilities and connected by an integrated network of eco-friendly pathways, bridleways and cycle routes.

Since the incorporation of the **East Malling Research Station** into the NIAB Group in 2016, to become NIAB EMR, the site has continued to build on its reputation as a site of research excellence in the horticultural sector. The recent announcement by Government that a NIAB EMR-led consortium has been successful in securing £18m of Strength in Places funding (as part of a £33m project) having been chosen as only one of seven projects in the UK to deliver cutting-edge R&D that will promise long-term economic benefits. This project will focus on increasing investment in emerging technologies, automation and smart-packaging for food production to help improve efficiencies and reduce waste. Plans are also progressing

well for the development of the East Malling Advanced Technology Horticultural Zone. Planning approval has been secured for Phase 1, which includes the erection of the 5,300m²(57,048ft²) of glasshouses and 2,290m²(24,649ft²) of supporting facilities. With £1.75m of Local Growth Fund the initial construction phase is set to begin imminently, with further development of the site subject to further approval and funding.

Demolition work at the former **Aylesford Newsprint** site was completed at the end of 2019, with the estate's new owners Panattoni submitting a planning application in Summer 2020 for a new logistics and warehousing development. Subject to planning, development is expected to commence in 2021.

Town Centres

The centre of Tonbridge remains the focus of considerable public and private investment. Following extensive public realm improvements over the past five years along the High Street, River Walk, Lock and outside Tonbridge Station, work was completed on a new cycle hub in early 2020.



Proposal for NIAB East Malling Research.

These key upgrades to the built environment have run concurrently with substantial projects aimed at 'levelling-up' public services. The most notable of these is the new Tonbridge Medical Centre completed in summer 2020. This provides much-needed medical facilities including a pharmacy, well-being clinic, consulting rooms and a minor surgery room. Consequently, the development has increased local medical capacity, expertise, employment and quality of care.

The Council has also been proactive in assisting local businesses, through a Shopfront Improvement Grant Scheme (2019-2020) supporting independent retailers and food outlets across the Borough's urban spaces. Take up on the scheme has been strong with 27 grants awarded for a variety of improvements.

Infrastructure

Over the years, the Borough has benefited from a number of key infrastructure investments which has brought benefits to residents. This includes investment in motorways and A-roads, improvements to rural broadband provision and flood mitigation measures.

Supported through DEFRA, the Local Growth Fund and other partnership funding, work on increasing the capacity of the Leigh Flood Storage Area (LFSA) and Hildenborough Embankment Scheme remains on course, with a planning application for the LFSA being submitted in summer 2020, and is scheduled to be completed by 2023.

These key infrastructure projects are critical to the local economy and environment and are at the heart of the Government's drive to build green, sustainable infrastructure.

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Proposal for Kings Hill, Countryside Development.

Kings Hill

At Kings Hill the Liberty/Prologis and KCC Development Partnership (KHDP) are continuing to deliver a new residential Village 3 (Phase 3), with the development of 635 homes to include major new infrastructure and the recently completed Linear Park. Countryside Properties and Bellway are building private homes and Clarion are delivering both affordable and private housing. All are active on site and their respective schemes are selling well. In keeping with previous developments at Kings Hill, the Village 3 project will provide a high quality living environment, incorporated into the

scheme's distinct 'landscape first' based upon Kent Design Guide principles, tested by the extensive local consultations.

Phase 5 was secured at a planning appeal in February 2020, the outline consent further converts three more undeveloped commercial areas to residential. The Phase 5 land areas in conjunction with the last remaining Phase 3 parcels were brought to the market at the end of the summer by KHDP. The form and type of housing units will be a far more varied mix of dwellings with a greater proportion of apartments and affordable housing than previously seen.

Tunbridge Wells

Work is underway on the new Local Plan for Tunbridge Wells which will guide development in the Borough from 2020 to 2037. The Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation took place in autumn 2019 and due to the volume and range of comments received, the timetable for the next stage of consultation has been delayed. The Pre-Submission Local Plan is now planned for Regulation 19 consultation during March/April 2021, in which new local housing need target figures (as per the Standard Method) and estimated delivery for housing and business floor space will be published. Following this, the Local Plan will be submitted to the Government for independent examination. The full programme has been published in the Local Development Scheme on the Council's website.



CREDIT: TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL

Proposal for the Amelia Scott, Tunbridge Wells.

Work is continuing on The Amelia Scott project, incorporating the Museum, arts and creative industries, Library services, Gateway and Tourist Information Centre alongside the Adult Education and Registration Services. The project is delivering a programme of capital works with renovations, repairs and conservation work to the existing Library, Museums and Art Gallery and Technical Institute buildings. The project will deliver new galleries and themed displays of museum collections, including the story of Tunbridge Wells and the High Weald; Portrait and Costume Gallery; Folk Art and Photography; 19th Century Decorative Arts and Change the World.

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

It will also deliver public realm improvements and achieve a landscaped courtyard space for mixed uses. The project is due to be delivered on schedule, and be open to visitors in spring 2022.

Construction work has begun on the Southborough Hub development, currently under construction by Baxall. The development will provide a GP surgery, football pavilion, offices, retail unit, community rooms, hall and public realm improvements. There will also be 69 residential units developed by Crest Nicholson. The Hub is anticipated to be opened in early 2021.

Commercial

British Land has recently completed its £11m refresh to Royal Victoria Place shopping centre. Key elements of the refresh include new mall floor tiling, provision of high-level artwork, feature ceilings to the lower mall, new lighting, toilets, replacement seating areas and digital wayfinding signage.

The development east of Kingstanding Way will create up to 74,000m² (796,520ft²) of B1 and B8 business floorspace. The development is forecast to create 3,700 new jobs directly and 2,000 indirectly, with an expected Gross Value Added (GVA) per annum of £275.7m in the local area and £307.8m in the wider area. The proposal was approved, subject to s106 and other reserved matters by the Borough Council's Planning Committee in September 2020.

The 1887 The Pantiles development is nearing completion for 127 new residential apartments, community and commercial space. The project is progressing well and now catching up on schedule due to COVID-19 delays.

The Premier Inn Hotel in Royal Tunbridge Wells opened in August 2020. The hotel on London Road is built on the



CREDIT: LICHFIELDS

Proposal for Kingstanding Way development.

Merevale House site and is adjacent to Tunbridge Wells Railway station. The hotel has 110 bedrooms.

The Public Realm Phase 2 improvements to Mount Pleasant Road outside Tunbridge Wells Town Hall have been completed and the road reopened in November 2019. Some minor works around the War Memorial have been undertaken since and are now complete.

The former Cinema site in central Royal Tunbridge Wells was subject to a new planning application to alter the previously approved development, which was approved in autumn 2019. Changes included reserving the residential units for over 65's and building four town houses adjacent to the development. A cinema is due to be provided on site, however there will be a reduction in commercial space. Works and a start on site have been delayed due to COVID-19.

Work has been completed on The Corn Exchange, turning it into a new flexible working space in the Pantiles, Royal Tunbridge Wells. The scheme is being managed by the Nevill Estate.

Residential

Work is continuing on site for the Hawkenbury Farm development to provide 243 new homes. Mascalls Court Farm development in Paddock Wood is progressing, with some units now occupied. The scheme is being undertaken by Persimmon Homes. Mascalls Farm development has secured planning permission for 314 dwellings and works have commenced on site. Planning application for Phase 2, an additional 116 dwellings is pending consideration.